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Senate resolution calls for Baldwin prison to be used to ease overcrowding in county jails

LANSING – A resolution introduced in the Michigan Senate Thursday calls on the governor to work with local governments to house inmates from overcrowded county jails in Baldwin's recently-shuttered Michigan Youth Correctional Facility.

"Using the Baldwin facility in this manner accomplishes three things," said Sen. Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau. "It allows us to keep faith with a local community whose people will otherwise pay the price of being abandoned by the state. It also shows support for local governments around the state who otherwise could not house jail inmates for their full sentences, and it puts to good use a state-of-the-art facility that would otherwise sit empty."

According to the resolution, the situation in Baldwin raises serious concerns about Michigan's future as the state tries to jump-start its economy. The resolution states: "Indeed, the example of a local community being left with such debt may well reverberate around the state as other local communities think twice about taking on expenses and debt to encourage job creation in their communities."

The resolution states that cooperation between state and local governments would not only make it possible to find a new use for the facility but also to help other communities around the state deal with the serious problem of overcrowding in their county jails.

The Baldwin facility was closed when its funding was eliminated in the state budget, which went into effect Oct. 1.

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Editors Note: Broadcast-quality audio of Sen. McManus speaking about Senate Resolution 83 is available on the Senate Majority Multimedia Link at <http://senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/mcmanus/index.htm>.

